

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 2, at line 3 as follows:

This application is related to ~~co-pending application~~ U.S. Application No. 09/414,710 filed on October 8, 1999, the entire contents of which are incorporated by reference herein.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 8, at line 12 as follows:

In accordance with the embodiment shown in **Figure 1**, the customer computers 110 and the service provider computers 120 are connected to the controller computer 130 through the network 150. Customers and service providers use their computers to connect to the Internet network 150. Once a connection has been established, service providers and customers will enter the URL, or Internet address, of the controller computer 130, and a plurality of logic units 131-134 within the controller computer establishes a computer connection with the customer computer 110 and the service provider computer 120. In one embodiment, after the computer connection has been established between the controller computer 130 and the service provider and customer computers, 120 and 110, respectively, a plurality of logic units 131-134 within the controller computer presents a web page on the service provider and customer computers.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, at line 11 as follows:

A plurality of logic units 131-134 within the controller computer 130 may present a web page on the customer computer 110 and the service provider computer 120 through which the plurality of logic units 131-134 prompts the customer and the service provider to submit the requested registration information. The plurality of logic units 131-134 ~~are~~ is linked with the database 135 and may automatically set up the accounts and automatically store the submitted registration information in the appropriate accounts on the database 135.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 9, at line 18 as follows:

Service providers typically submit a description or a listing for each service they will provide through the web site. After the controller computer 130 has stored the description or listing, the service described may be offered to all of the users who browse the web site. Access to the web site may be established as described above, with the customer using a user computer ("customer computer") 110 to connect to a network 150 and then entering the URL of the controller computer 130. A logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 within the controller computer 130 then establishes a computer connection with the customer computer 110.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, at line 2 as follows:

After the computer connection has been established, in one embodiment customers will have the option of executing a keyword search for service providers. The keyword search can be executed from a web page presented by a logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 of the controller computer 130 on the customer computer 110. In an alternative embodiment, the system can be accessed by a third party website. A keyword search typically consists of scanning a database for words that match the keywords entered. In this embodiment, the keyword search will be executed against the stored descriptions and listing data. In one embodiment, customers will view a list of service providers matching the keyword search criteria on a web page presented by the logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 on the customer computer. Customers will have the option of viewing the service providers listed according to price, availability, or customer evaluations in either ascending or descending order, though the service providers can be listed in any number of ways. As an alternative to a keyword search, customers can select a category to view a predetermined list of service providers.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 10, at line 24 as follows:

In one embodiment, a logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 within the systems presents, in response to a customer selection of a service provider from the list, a listing page that contains additional information about the selected service provider and the selected information service. **Figure 3** illustrates an example of a listing page that provides more detailed information

about a service provider that goes by the name of Jim. The listing page 300 shown in **Figure 3** provides a brief description the information services provided 310 and may also include rating information 320, a picture of the service provider 330, a rate or price per minute 340, as well as other information that the potential customer may find helpful such as the education background of the service provider 345. The listing page 300 may also include an icon with hyperlink 350 that shows whether or not the service provider is available, and if he is, it may provide hyperlinks that enable the customer to call 350 or email 355 the service provider. The information provided in a listing page may be conveyed in other forms, e.g., instead of a picture or photo 330 the service provider may choose to be represented with an avatar or other information-rich graphic, and may include other types of information in addition or instead of the information shown in the embodiment of **Figure 3**.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 11, at line 17 as follows:

When a customer decides to receive information, services, or just pleasant conversation from the service provider, the customer may request to have a real-time communications connection established with the service provider. For example, from the listing page illustrated in **Figure 3**, a customer may click on the "Call Now" hyperlink 350 to send such a request and, in response, a logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 within the system attempts to establish a real-time communications connection between the customer and the service provider. This real-time communications connection can take the form of a telephone connection, website chat, or voice connection over the Internet.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 12, at line 2 as follows:

In one embodiment, if a connection should be attempted and the service provider proves to be unavailable to respond, a logic unit of the plurality of logic units 131-134 within the controller will initiate a search of the system's list of service providers for an alternate service provider. In one embodiment, the list of alternate service providers will be made up of service providers who match the selected service provider when compared using a pre-established set of

criteria. The criteria can either be formulated ahead of time by the system administrator or entered into the system by the user. The criteria used could include subject matter and/or probably price.